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RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1624
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0832
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA CITY 0107
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 8484
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 3916
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RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
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SUBJECT: CODEL REID'S VISIT TO FOZ DO IGUACU, BRAZIL

REF: (A) ASUNCION 989; (B) ASUNCION 986

SUMMARY

1. (U) During a November 27-28 visit to Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, Codel Reid met with the Ambassador and Embassy Brasilia and ConGen Sao Paulo officers, visited Federal Police headquarters and an operating center of the Maritime Federal Police, and toured Itaipu Dam. The delegation dined with three influential Brazilian Senators as well as the Mayor of Foz and several members of his Cabinet. This successful visit afforded the Senators an opportunity to learn about the tri-border area (TBA - Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina) from the Brazilian side, and to strengthen contacts and ties with national and local political leaders. End Summary.

2. (U) Senator Harry Reid (D-NV), accompanied by Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Thad Cochran (R-MS), and Robert Menendez (D-NJ), as well as six staff members, arrived in Foz do Iguacu from Asuncion, Paraguay the morning of November 27. They were greeted by Paulo MacDonald Ghisi, Mayor of Foz and Consul General (CG) White. The entire delegation, which was followed by local media throughout the day, first paid a visit to the world-famous Iguacu Falls national park, followed by a briefing conducted over lunch by Ambassador and Embassy and ConGen staff.

VISIT WITH FEDERAL POLICE

3. (U) At the headquarters of the Federal Police (DPF), DPF Director Jose Carlos Calazane presented a video highlighting DPF's

efforts against organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and contraband (e.g., marijuana, firearms, electronics, and clothing). Asked by one Senator why the U.S. should be concerned with the TBA when we have our own problems along the U.S.-Mexican border, the Director was quick to respond that illegal immigration and drug trafficking take various indirect routes before reaching a final destination, possibly the U.S., suggesting that the focus of interdiction efforts should be expanded. The Director addressed mostly smuggling issues as opposed to international terrorism concerns, but he did touch upon the Joint Intelligence Center and the question of cooperation with Argentina and Paraguay, indicating, without elaborating, that law enforcement entities representing the three countries do have a working relationship.

14. (U) At the Federal Police Maritime facility (DEPOM) located on Lake Itaipu, the delegation received an additional briefing regarding specific interdiction operations along the waterways with Paraguay and were shown a vast array of confiscated items taken from smugglers trying to cross the border via boat. The DPF agent in charge stated that the majority of incidents involving smugglers end up in conflict, with shots fired. Advanced radar tracking capabilities as well as high-tech communications were also highlighted, but manpower remains an issue: The facility could accommodate up to 30 DPF agents, but only 12 were assigned there.

15. (U) Finally, the Senators were taken on a brief windshield tour of Itaipu Dam, now the world's second-largest hydro-electric facility (after the Three Gorges Dam in China), a bi-national project jointly conceived and operated by the Governments of Brazil and Paraguay. Itaipu generates approximately 95 percent of Paraguay's electricity and between 20 and 25 percent of Brazil's.

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16. (U) The Senators' spouses separately visited Fundacao Nosso Lar, a shelter for victims of human trafficking established with USAID assistance and operated by the municipality, and participated in a march organized by the Mayor and Mrs. MacDonald to call for more research, prevention, and treatment of breast cancer.

SENATORS AND MAYOR

17. (U) The CODEL hosted a dinner for three Brazilian Senators who flew from Brasilia for the occasion - Heraclito Fortes (Democratic Party (DEM) from Piaui), Chairman of the Foreign Relations and National Defense Committee; Joao Tenorio (Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) from Alagoas), a sugar cane grower who is on the Permanent Subcommittee on Biofuels; and Adelmir Santana (DEM from the Federal District), a successful businessman who serves on the Economic Affairs Committee. Also present were Mayor MacDonald and the Municipal Secretary of International Affairs, Sergio Lobato, and of Government, Carlos Fernandes Duso, and the Technical Director of Itaipu Dam, Antonio Otelo Cardoso.

18. (U) In his informal welcoming remarks, the Mayor thanked the U.S. Senators for visiting his city and the three Brazilian Senators for helping him draw attention to wonders of Foz do Iguacu. In an interesting turn, Mayor MacDonald launched into criticism that the United States is devoting so much attention to China instead of taking greater advantage of the trade opportunities Brazil offers. He contrasted Brazil's commitment to democracy with China's totalitarian system and accompanying human rights violations. The Mayor was eager to demonstrate that Foz and the TBA are not all about terrorism, and called for more partnerships between the USG and the GoB, as well as state and local governments, to help the region achieve its economic potential. Senator Fortes spoke briefly about his positive experience with inter-parliamentary engagement with his U.S. counterparts and stressed the benefits and rewards of such dialogue.

MEDIA COVERAGE

¶9. (U) Media coverage of CODEL Reid included extensive local coverage of the group's activities in Foz but also gained some limited play in the national media. Most national media comments cited the brevity of their time in Brazil within the overall context of their five-nation visit. The local Foz do Iguacu papers, A Gazeta do Iguacu and Jornal do Iguacu, provided favorable coverage of the CODEL in a national security context. The Senators' spouses (along with the Ambassador's and CG's wives) were pictured on the front page of the November 28 Gazeta do Iguacu participating in the breast cancer awareness march. Several Brazilian on-line sites picked up the coverage of the local papers and repeated the national security themes echoed in the previous days reporting. All in all, media coverage was positive.

COMMENT

¶10. (U) The visit to Foz was informative and useful in improving our relations in this tri-border region. It enabled the Senators to demonstrate the U.S. interest in South America and the TBA, and to exchange views with national and local political figures. The presentations by the Federal Police were especially useful in highlighting the law enforcement challenges posed by the proximity

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of other countries. End Comment.

¶11. (U) This cable was cleared by CODEL Reid following the delegation's departure, and approved by Ambassador Sobel.

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